

Criminal Justice Team - Adult
Lancaster County Substance Abuse Action Coalition
Minutes 7/27/04

Next Meeting is Wednesday August 25, 2004 7:30 a.m. 9th and J St.

Present were: Kim Etherton, Community Sentencing Alternatives, Steve Rowoldt, Lancaster Probation, Lynn Buchanan, St. Monica's, Otto Schultz, SAAC

Aimee Baade, U. S. Public Defender and Steve Goehring, U. S. Probation had schedule conflicts.

We decided to look at small specific issues that we can begin to act on rather than continue to work with large overarching (and apparently overwhelming) issues.

Problem: Soon Criminal Justice will be sending to evaluators prior arrest record, Blood Alcohol Levels, Risk Instrument, and SSI results. There will now be 4-8 weeks to have the client/offender line up the evaluation, find out who the evaluator is, get signed authorizations to release information, get the correct information (Blood Alcohol Levels, Risk Instrument, and SSI results) to the evaluators, have the evaluation interview, complete the evaluation report including the above information and get the report to the court.

This process could be speeded up if there was a common authorization-to-release-information form, so that the client/offender could sign the form before deciding where he or she is going for an evaluation. There may be other ways to speed up this process as well so that it meets the new deadlines.

Steve will set a time to meet with treatment people discuss having a common authorization form or other way to resolve this issue. They might need to meet one to three times altogether.

A second issue is that offender/clients who do not have a serious enough problem to rate a diagnosis of substance use disorder are often referred to a set number of AA/NA meetings as an educational tool and to orient them to Twelve Step groups should they need one in the future. In order to orient them better to Twelve Step groups, a class that included assignments to attend AA/NA or other self-help meetings would be more effective. Instructors could refer to meetings that are open and help people select meetings that are more appropriate for them. Courts generally will include recommendations made by evaluators in the court orders. Evaluators don't recommend an orientation class like this because it isn't offered. Providers don't offer the class because it is not recommended and they can't be sure if the court would support this recommendation.

The courts likely would support such a class provided they have a sound rationale, are well run and meet some basic criteria.

Otto will contact several agencies to see if there is interest in developing such a class.